

## **FREE STANDING SUPPORT FOR POSITIONAL BOTTLE FEEDER**

### **CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application claims the benefit of United States Provisional Patent Application No. 60/431,746, filed on 12/09/02, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference thereto.

The present invention relates generally to improvements in the water-feeding of pets, particularly dogs, and particularly in attending to this chore in other than the owner's home.

### **EXAMPLE OF THE PRIOR ART**

It is already known, as illustrated and described in U.S. Patent 3,589,338 for "HOLDER FOR TUBE AND BOTTLE FEEDERS FOR PETS" issued to Lovitz on June 29, 1971, that dogs are smart enough to be trained to operate a bottle feeder by exerting their body weight to open a valve releasing water to the end purpose of being consumed by the dog, but the stability for the bottle feeder is provided by it being confined to a wall of a cage, thus lacking a portability to any location not having a cage, which typically is a location away from the home of the pet owner.

Thus, although not as desirable, an alternative is to feed pet dogs using an open water-filled dish even though it is subject to splashing and often unsanitary conditions due to its exposure.

Broadly, it is an object of the present invention to overcome the foregoing and other shortcomings of the prior art.

More particularly, it is an object to use a free standing support stand for a bottle feeder and use to advantage the weight of the water in the bottle until totally consumed to serve as ballast, which in cooperation with a base, contributes adequate stability to maintain a vertical orientation of the support or stand, all as will be better understood as the description proceeds.

The description of the invention which follows, together with the accompanying drawings should not be construed as limiting the invention to the example shown and described, because those skilled in the art to which this invention appertains will be able to devise other forms thereof within the ambit of the appended claims.

Fig. 1 is an isolated view of a pet bottle feeder on a free standing support according to the present invention;

Figs. 2 and 3 respectively illustrate upper and lower wire clips for attaching a pet bottle feeder at a selected operative position on the support of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4, like Fig. 1, is similarly a perspective view but illustrating a feeding use of the supported bottle feeder.

Bottle feeders, exemplified by the illustrated embodiment generally designated 10, are in popular use since a pet 12 can be readily trained to push in against a ball valve 14 and release by gravity flow along an angularly oriented tube 16 drinking water from a bottle container 18, thus obviating the less desirable option of using an open water-filled dish subject to splashing and often unsanitary conditions due to its exposure. The tradeoff, however, is that the water-filled dish is appropriate for all sizes of pets whereas the supported Figs. 1 and 4 bottle feeder must have its position thereon correlated to the height of the feeding pet. Underlying the present invention is the recognition that this correlation is readily achieved in the use of a free standing support, generally designated 20, because the weight of the water in the bottle until totally consumed serves as ballast,

as noted by the arrow 22, and in cooperation with a base, generally designated 24, the noted conditions 22, 24 add adequate stability to maintain a vertical orientation of the support or stand 20. Heretofore, as illustrated and described in U.S. patent 3,589,338 for "Holder For Tube and Bottle Feeders For Pets" issued to Lovitz on June 29, 1971, stability for a bottle feeder was confined to a wall of a cage, thus lacking the portability of the within free standing support 20, and also lacking any size accommodation or correlation to different sizes of pet species, as will be better understood from the description which follows.

Base 24 is constructed of two feet 26 and 28 of wire construction material, oriented transversely of the vertical plane of the stand 20. Stand 20 consists of two vertical wire extensions 30 and 32 of the base 24 with a closed end 34 delimiting, in a preferred embodiment, a height of approximately 21 inches. Starting at a height above the base 24 of approximately 12 inches are successive rungs, consisting of a bottom or first rung 36, second rung 38, third rung 40, and fourth rung 42, each welded at opposite ends to the verticals 30 and 32, and uniformly set at height increments of approximately  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches, individually and collectively designated 44. Upper (Fig. 2) and lower (Fig. 3) clips 46 and 48 are disposed in encircling relation about the bottle container 18 and hooks 50 thereon are engaged to a cooperating rung. The clip 48 is shaped to fit beneath, and thus provide support from below, to the bottom end of the bottle container 18.

In field testing it has been determined that the bottle 10 supported adjacent the first and second rungs 36 and 38 is at an appropriate height of 13 inches for the water feeding of puppies and shihtzu and like-sized species, adjacent the second and third rungs 38 and 40 at an approximate height of  $15\frac{3}{4}$  inches for the water feeding of cocker spaniel and like-sized species, and adjacent the third and fourth rungs 40 and 42 at an approximate height of 19 inches for the water feeding of German Shepherd, Labrador Retriever and like-sized species.

While the apparatus for practicing the within inventive method, as well as said method herein shown and disclosed in detail is fully capable of attaining the objects and providing the advantages hereinbefore stated, it is to be understood that it is merely illustrative of the presently preferred embodiment of the invention and that no limitations are intended to the detail of construction or design herein shown other than as defined in the appended claims.